

The Use of Swear Words in the Movies with Different Topics and Characters

Rizki Rinaldi

Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU)

Email: rizki.rinaldi1988@gmail.com

Abstract: *This study was aimed at examining the use of swear word in the movies with different topics and characters. The objectives if this study were to find out the reasons of using swear word in the movies. This study was conducted by descriptive qualitative method. The source of data was transcript the movies. The data were identified, analyzed, and categorized based on Ljung (2012) theory. The technique of data collection was interactive model by Miles and Huberman (2014). The findings of the study showed that : 1. There are three ways of using swear words such as (1) interjection, (2) emphazier, (3), expletive slot filler in each movies, but from all of that ways interjections is the most in each movies. 2. The reasons for using the swear words in the movies are psychological; and social movies.*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini ditujukan untuk mengetahui pengguna kata-kata makian di film dengan perbedaan topic dan karakter. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menemukan alasan penggunaan kata-kata makian didalam film. penelitian ini dilakukan dengan metode qualitative deskriptif. Sumber data adalah transkrip film. Data tersebut diidentifikasi, dianalisis, dan dikelompokkan berdasarkan teori Ljung (2012). Teknik pengambilan data adalah teknik transkrip. Tehnil analisis data adalah model Miles and Huberman (2014). Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa : 1. Ada tiga caa dalam penggunaan kata-kata makian (1). Interjection, (2)emphasizer, (3) expletive slot fillers. 2. alasan-alasan penggunaan kata-kata makian adalah psychology dan social factor.

Key word : swear word, movies, topics, characters

Introduction

Language is a system of communication particularly the human ability to do so, and a language is any specific example of such a system. The scientific study of language is called linguistics. We use language to express inner thoughts and emotions, make sense of complex and abstract thought, to learn to communicate with others, to fulfill our wants and needs, as well as to establish rules and maintain our culture.

Language is a system of communication based upon words and the combination of words into sentences, We are able to exchange knowledge, beliefs, opinions, wishes, threats, commands, thanks, promises, declarations, feelings – only our imagination sets limits. We can laugh to express amusement, happiness,

or disrespect, we can smile to express amusement, pleasure, approval, or bitter feelings, we can shriek to express anger, excitement, or fear, we can clench our fists to express determination, anger or a threat, we can raise our eyebrows to express surprise or disapproval, and we can swear when we disagree about something or angry and when we heard badnews , but our system of communication before anything else is language.

One of the language functions is a tool to show one's expression or feeling of anger, happiness, sadness, and loneliness. In expressing it, people have many ways of using language and one of them is by producing swearing words. People always associate swear words with nasty words, which are not allowed to be used in a conversation or talk. Swear words are fascinating. Society condemns them, few admit use them, and still, everybody swears, at least occasionally. In simple words, swear words are contradictive for people in communication. Swearing makes many people upset, annoyed, insulted, mad or even angry. It is really a verbal harassment if other people hear it.

Hughes (1991) commented that swearing draws upon such powerful and incongruous resonators as religion, sex, madness, excretion, and nationality, encompassing an extraordinary variety of attitudes, including the violent, the amusing, the shocking, the absurd, the casual and the impossible. It can be simplified that the usage of swearing will give negative impacts on the hearers.

Meanwhile, Dutton (2007) argued that swearwords have negative meanings because they are disgusting, rude, and offensive. He also stated that most people found words such as *fuck* and *cunt* offensive at least to a degree and associated negative ideas with those who used such words. Then, in British English at least, a person who uses swearwords refer to a person being, essentially, working class and, perhaps by extension, a person who is distant from the power centre of society. Based on the statement above, it can be concluded that the usage of swear words have negative effects for others and for the people who use the words are considered the people from low class people i.e. working class people.

Swear words are not only used in negative meaning such as to insult people, to hurt someone, to put someone's down , but swear words can be used for

positive one also. Jay, a psycholinguist of Massachusetts College of Liberal Art and Author of *Cursing in America*, (2006) says that overall, the scientific evidence suggests swearing is good for you. We are the only animal that can curse, he says, which sometimes help us avoid physical violence. It allows us to express our emotions symbolically and at a distance.

Jay's (1992) content analysis of films made between 1939 and 1989 offers some support for this claim, reporting a significant increase in the use of profanity. More recently, Dufrene and Lehman (2002) reported a perception of increased use of profanity in the everyday lives of Americans and in Hollywood films and network television. Hollywood films have a deep influence on American culture, as they are not only shown in theaters but are seen by millions more on television and through video rentals (Waterman, 2005). Teenagers are among those most often exposed—they are a targeted audience segment for movie makers (Stern, 2005) because they comprise a significant and loyal portion of the movie-going public (Smith, 2005). For this young, impressionable audience, the media serves an important socializing function (Arnett, 1995), and researchers report parental concern that children will adopt coarse language as a result of media exposure (Bushman & Cantor, 2003).

In the movies that we watch everyday we hear so many actors use swear words in various forms swear word, swear word that there is a form of taboo words or swear words but the meaning of the word it is not for the swearing opponent speech, but only to replace the original meaning of the swear word there is also a form of formulaic language and the last one swear word as a emotive language.

The problems of this study based on the previous explanation are formulated in the form of research question as the following.

1. How are the swear word used
2. Why are the swear words used the way they are

Research Method

This study will be conducted by applying descriptive qualitative design. According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992) qualitative research is descriptive. This study will be designed by applying multy case design,there will be two topics of the movie to be studied and two different groups of the movie characters.

Discussion

1. Ways of Using Swear Words

Theoretically, there are three ways of using Swear Word, they are (1) interjection, (2) emphasizer, (3) expletive slot fillers (Ljung, 2011)

All of these ways are found in the four (4) movies. Each of these ways is presented as follows.

1. Interjections

Interjections are utterances of Swear Word expressing surprise, pain, fear, anger, disappointment, even joy, emphatic, disagreement, incredulity, speaker stance (Ljung, 2011). By using this concept as the predetermined category, the data analysis found out that the interjection happens in the movies, as show in data 1.

Data 1.

Jacob :Luke. Luke? Luke?

Luke :What the hell? This is **BULLSHIT**. [having looking at the notice saying that his house was confiscated by the bank]

Jacob :We tried to stop them, man,but there's nothing we could do.

Luke got to get in there.They can't do this to us!

(SU3D/GT/TE/p.23/L-24)

In data 1, the phrase *bullshit* to be swear word according to the encyclopedia of swearing. Its meaning is “ nonsense, rubbish, lies ” (Hughes,2006).

In data 1, the expression of “ *Bullshit* “ implicitly convey that Luke thought that he was in consigning situation became his house was forfeited, it is informed in a notice stucked to his house wall.

This situation made Luke feel angry or disappointed and spontaneously by expressions his feeling by saying “ what the hell “

In the four movies, the interjection is used to express 10 kinds of meaning as seen in table 4.1

Table 4.1 The swear word used in Interjection

No	Quotes	Identity	Swear word
1	Surprise	(SU3D/GT/TE/p.24/L-20)	Jacob :Luke. Luke? Luke? Luke :What the HELL ? This is BULLSHIT
2	Pain	(SU3D/GT/TE/p.24/L-21)	Jacob : Luke, Luke. Luke : What the FUCK ?
3	Fear	(FaF/BT/Ad/p.29/L-6)	Reyes :Hey, what is he doing?We've got him!Close down the bridge!Do something, ASSHOLE !Kill him, DAMMIT !
4	Anger	(SU3D/GT/TE/p.21/L-1)	luke :What the HELL , Walt? (talk to banker)
5	Disappointment	(FaF/BT/Ad/p.6/L-8)	Dom : DAMN ! [listen the explanation from vince]
6	Even joy	(AP/BT/Te/p.33/L-19)	Bull :Beta House FUCKING rules!
7	Emphatic	(FaF/BT/Ad/p.3/L-20)	BRIAN : This roofing plastic says YOU'RE FULL OF SHIT .
8	Disagreement	(FaF/BT/Ad/p.5/L-13)	Brian :that is such HORSE SHIT [listen the explain from vince]
9	Incredulity	(FaF/BT/Ad/p.3/L-13)	Brian :Bridge! There is a bridge! Brian : OH, SHIT ! [when the car jump to the river]
10	Speaker stance	(FaF/BT/Ad/p.5/L-6)	Hobbs : STAY THE FUCK OUT OF MY WAY . [listener the

			police]
--	--	--	----------

2. Emphasizers

Swearing in English is often used to place emphasis on a following noun (Ljung,2011). In this definition, *emphasis* is considered as giving stress on something. The emphasis is usually formed in WH-words, as seen in data 2

Edgar : [came into Stifler house and broke the glass of the house]
Erik :Whoa, whoa! Hey, hey, hey! [Erik happens to be at the Stifler house]
Stifler :Oh! What the **FUCK**? [looking at Edgar's breaking the glass]
Edgar :We, the members of the Geek House,challenge you, the Beta House,to
the Greek Olympiad.

(AP/BT/Te/p.26/L-1)

In data 2 *Fuck* is considered as swear word. Firstly, it is because the word matches the characteristic of swear word as presented in the encyclopedia of swearing (Huges,2006). The meaning of “fuck” in the encyclopedia is not any more as it was, meaning something related to copulation. Currently, its meaning becomes wider and its use also wider, not limited certain speaking or situation. According to the Merriam Webster dictionary, the *Fuck* means anger, contempt or disgust.

In the four movies, swear words are used two times by using different swear words as seen in table 4.2

Table 4.2 The swear word used in emphasize

No	Quotes	Identity	Swear word
1	Interrogative	(AP/BT/Te/p.25/L-12)	Erik :Whoa, whoa! Hey, hey, hey! Stifler :Oh! What the FUCK ?

3. Expletive slot fillers

Expletive slot fillers are expressions indicating a speaker attitude towards something by using swear word. The function of the swear word in the expression

is to intensify the attitude. The intensify function of the swear word may be realized by using swear word with (1) adverbs which intensify the adverb, with (2) adjective which intensify the adjective and (3) using the swear word itself as adjective. By using this concept as the predetermined category, the data analysis found out that the expletive slot fillers happens in the movies, as show in data 3

Data 3

Hobbs :The GT40 that was missing from the manifest.
 Mac :87, Followed the trail a couple of miles.Pretty easy in this scrub.Can't move without leaving a sign.
 Hobbs :Give me **the DAMN** veggies.
 Mac :The ground rolls into a hardpack and we lost that track, too.
 (FaF/BT/Ad/p.7/L-11)

In data 3, *Damn* is considered as swear word because according to encyclopedia of swear word, damn belongs to swear word. The meaning of damn in its original sense is *damnare*, which in Latin, it means secular and legal, “to condemn, doom to punishment or inflict damage upon,” which are the early senses of *damn* in Middle English. (Hughes,2006)

The word of *damn* is used to express of speaker attitudes of Hobs, he felt anger to Dom and tried to looking for Dom and want to show he is a hero and stronger than other.

In the four movies, swear words are used once as seen in table 4.3

Table 4.3 The Expletive slot fillers are used by using two different class of way

No	Quotes	Identity	Swear word
1	Adverbs which intensify the adverbs	(FaF/BT/Ad/p.7/L-11)	Hobbs :Give me the DAMN veggies.
2	Adjective which intensify the adjective	(AP/BT/Te/p.7/L-3)	Bull :Greek House FUCKING stupid!
3	Using swear word itself as adjective	(AP/BT/Te/p.7/L-3)	. Edgar :The FUCKING kegs are dry!

Tabulation of the ways of using swear word

No	Ways of using swear word	No	Quotes	Data	Total
1	Interjection	1	Surprise	(Su3d/GT/Te/p.23/L-24) (FaF/BT/Ad/p.3/L-11) (FaF/BT/Ad/p.3/L-13) (FaF/BT/Ad/p.10/L-25)	23
		2	Pain	(SU3D/GT/TE/p.24/L-21) (FaF/BT/Ad/p.11/L-6)	
		3	Fear	(FaF/BT/Ad/p.29/L-6)	
		4	Anger	(SU3D/GT/TE/p.21/L-18) (SU3D/GT/TE/p.20/L-25) (SU3D/GT/TE/p.21/L-18) (SU3D/GT/TE/p.24/L-25) (FaF/BT/Ad/p.5/L-9)	
		5	Disappointment	(FaF/BT/Ad/p.6/L-8) (FaF/BT/Ad/p.14/L-23)	
		6	Even joy	(AP/BT/Te/p.6/L-3)	
		7	Emphatic	(FaF/BT/Ad/p.3/L-20) (FaF/BT/Ad/p.10/L-12) (FaF/BT/Ad/p.11/L-29)	
		8	Disagreement	(FaF/BT/Ad/p.5/L-13) (FaF/BT/Ad/p.3/L-20) (FaF/BT/Ad/p.5/L-13)	
		9	Incredulity	(FaF/BT/Ad/p.3/L-13)	
		10	Speaker stance	(FaF/BT/Ad/p.5/L-6)	
2	Emphasizers	1	WH-Question	(AP/BT/Te/p.6/L-20) (SU3D/GT/TE/p.20/L-25) (SU3D/GT/TE/p.21/L-18) (SU3D/GT/TE/p.24/L-20) (SU3D/GT/TE/p.24/L-25) (FaF/BT/Ad/p.9/L-29) (FaF/BT/Ad/p.18/L-20) (AP/BT/Te/p.8/L-16)	13

				(AP/BT/Te/p.17/L-18) (AP/BT/Te/p.24/L-7) (AP/BT/Te/p.8/L-16) (AP/BT/Te/p.28/L-12) (JE/GT/Ad/p.23/L.13)	
3	Expletive slot fillers	1	Adverbs	(FaF/BT/Ad/p.7/L-11)	3
		2	Adjective	(AP/BT/Te/p.7/L-14)	
		3	Swear word itself as adjective	(AP/BT/Te/p.7/L-3)	
Total					39

2. The Reason for Using Swear Words of Teenagers and Adult in the Movies

Theoretically, the psychological factors contributes to how many and how often one uses the swear word. One who has labile psychology condition use more swear word than one who has stable psychology condition. The psychology condition, labile or stable is related to many factors, and one of the factors is *age*. So young people use more swear word than adult people.

In addition to the psychological factor, social situation also contribute to the use of swear word. In a bad situation both young and adult people tend to use more swear word. (Anderson 2002)

1. Age factor

With reference to this theory, the data analysis showed that the use of swear word by teenager and adult actor or actress as in the movie is age factor. This is supported by the data in table 4.4

The Used of Swear Words by Teenagers and Adults in Movies of Good Topic

Actors / actress Swear word	Teenager actor and actress	F	Adult / actors and actress	F
Ass		2		-

Fuck		1		-
Hell		2		1
Shit		1		-
Total		6		1

In table 4.4 , swear words are mostly uttered by the teenager actors or actress, the swear words like *fuck*, *ass*, *hell*, and *shit* are all uttered by the teenagers. This means that the good topic of the movie does not affect the students behavior in using swear words. If the topic does not affect their behavior, then it might be affected by their ten-age, which is know as the condition in which they have label psychological condition. This is contrastive to the adults movie actors and actress as it is seen in table 4.4 where the adult use only one swear word, namely *hell*.

This means that their mature psychological condition enable them to avoid using the swear words. In addition, the psychological factor of the adults players may also help them select the most appropriate swear words. In table 4.4, the adult players do not use swear word such as *ass*, *fuck*, and *shit*.

So, in short the interpretation of each data in table 4.4 may result in the conclusion that the factor using one to use swear word is age factor.

2. Social factor

Theoretically, one's behavior including the use of swear word are governed by the situation (Anderson 2002)

Empirically, the data analysis showed that the movie players behavior are effected by the social factor. In this study, social situation is represented by the good and bad topics of the movies. This finding is supported by the data in table 4.5

Table 4.5 the use of swear word of different topics by teenager player

Topics		
Swear word	Bad	Good

Ass	8	2
Jesus	2	-
Fuck	19	1
Hell	5	2
Shit	3	1
Bitch	2	-
Bastard fucked	1	-
Damn	1	-
Mother fucker	1	-
Total	42	6

In table 4.5, the use of swear word in bad topics by the teenagers are more than they do in good topics. This means that the swear word even though the teenagers have label psychological condition, using of swear word in good topics.

Usually, adult more stable than teenager but in bad situation adult also will do swear word. This means that the social condition affect to using the swear word, this supported by the empirical data supported by(Anderson 2002). The data analysis showed that the use of swear word in different topics by adult player as seen in table 4.6

Table 4.6 The Use Of Swear Word By The Adult Player In Bad And Good Movies

Topics Swear word	Bad	Good
Ass	8	-
Fuck	1	-
Hell	5	1
Shit	17	-
Bitch	3	-
Damn	5	-
God damn	8	-

Bastard	1	
Total	49	1

That the social factor may cause one's behaviors in using swear word may also be true not only to the teenager player, but also be true to adult players. Data in table 4.6 showed that adult players use more swear word in the bad topics than they do in bad topics.

The social situation does not only affect the number of the swear word used by them but also affect the types of swear word. In table 4.6 all types of swear word are uttered by the adult players. However, it may be will noted that the adult players still feel reluctant to utter hard swear word like *fuck*. In the table 4.6 the swear word is uttered just once. This means that social condition cannot force them to use all types of swear word in equal frequency. Their mature psychological factor enable them to control which of the most appropriate to use by the adult player.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis, the conclusions were stated as following :

1. There are three ways of using swear words such as (1) Interjection, (2) Emphasizer, (3) Expletive Slot Fillers in each movies, but from all of those ways, interjection is the most in each movies.
2. The reason of using the swear words of teeanger and adult in the movies of good and bad topics is caused by the psychological motives.

REFERENCES

- Alla,keith.,burridge kate.2006.Forbiden Words : *Taboo And The Censoring Of Language*.cambridge:Cambridge university press
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

- Bandura. (1994). Social cognitive theory of mass communication. In J. Bryant & D. Zillmann(Eds.), *Media effects : Advances in theory and research* (pp. 61-90). Hillsdale, NJ :Erlbaum
- Bogdan, R and Biklen, S. 1992. *Qualitative Research for Education*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon
- Hubberman, M. & Miles, M.B. 1984. *Qualitative Data analysis : A Source book of New Methods*. Beverly Hills : Sage.
- Hughes, Geoffrey.2006.*An Encyclopedia of Swearing :The Social History Of Oaths Profanity Foul Language And Ethnic Slurs In The English – speaking world*. United States Of America: M.E.Sharpe
- Ljung,magnus.2011. *Swearing A Cross-Cultural Linguistic Study*. Great Britain :Palgrave Macmillan
- Jay, T. (1992). *Cursing in America: A psycholinguistic study of dirty language in the courts, in the movies, in the schoolyards and on the streets*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Jay, T. (2000). *Why we curse: A neuro-psycho-social theory of speech*. Philadelphia: John Benjamins
- Kaye, B. K., & Sapolsky, B. S. (2004). Watch your mouth! An analysis of profanity uttered by children on prime-time television. *Mass Communication & Society*, 7(4), 429–452.
- Kaye, B. K., & Sapolsky, B. S. (2004a). Talking a “blue” streak: Context and offensive language in prime time network television programs. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 81(4), 911–927.
- Odin rasyidin.2010. *Kajian bentuk,kategori dan sumber makian, serta alasan penggunaan makian oleh mahasiswa*. Universitas Indonesia
- Pinker,S.2007.*the stuff of thought.language as window in to human nature*. New York:viking

